

SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SMUIN LIGHTS UP BAY AREA WITH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREAT THE CHRISTMAS BALLET

Shows in Walnut Creek, Carmel, Mountain View, and San Francisco
November 16-December 24, 2018

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (16 October 2018) — Smuin kicks off the holidays with the return of *The Christmas Ballet*, the beloved Bay Area tradition featuring two acts packed to the brim with both flawless classical ballet and red-hot contemporary numbers. Celebrating the company's milestone silver anniversary, the 2018 edition of *The Christmas Ballet* will include many original pieces from founder Michael Smuin, plus two festive world premieres: a beautiful new work by Rex Wheeler, plus a pas de deux by Erica Felsch set to the classic "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Featuring the perfect combination of long-time favorites and delightful new surprises, this charming medley is set to holiday tunes and incorporates a variety of popular dance styles including ballet, tap, jazz, and swing. The first act, Classical Christmas, features dancers in brilliant white ensembles performing time-honored favorites of the holiday season. The Cool Christmas second act delivers a red-hot costume change along with modern festive numbers, including the iconic "Santa Baby" featuring a 42-foot long feather boa. A delightful holiday treat that was declared "the finest toast to the season" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Christmas Ballet* will tour the Bay Area beginning with shows in Walnut Creek (November 16-17), continuing in Carmel (November 30-December 1) and Mountain View (December 5-9), and finishing up with its annual holiday run at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco (December 13-24). Tickets (\$25-\$91) are available by calling the individual venues (*see below for details*) or visiting www.smuinballet.org.

In celebration of Smuin's 25th anniversary season, *The Christmas Ballet* will honor founder Michael Smuin's original works while maintaining the company's long-held tradition of unveiling new surprises. Returning to the stage are a handful of audience favorites including Smuin's nod to Hanukkah, "Licht benshon," a tropical oasis in "Christmas Island," and the Latin-inspired "La Calandria," among others.

THE CHRISTMAS BALLET 2017 EDITION

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The first act, Classical Christmas, will feature the dancers in snow-white costumes performing traditional holiday favorites such as Michael Smuin's "Bach Magnificat" and "Wassail," and Amy Seiwert's "Caroling, Caroling, Bright, Bright." This year, the company also unveils a world premiere from former dancer Rex Wheeler in the first act—a classic bravura duet for two men. Born in London, Wheeler performed with Birmingham Royal Ballet and, on several occasions, for the Royal Family before joining Smuin in 2015. As a choreographer, he has created works for organizations across the country, as well as numerous dances for Smuin. His premiere of "Christmas Tree Rock" was warmly received last season, and returns in the second act of this year's edition of *The Christmas Ballet*.

The Cool Christmas second act kicks off with a red-hot costume change and features a spirited medley of contemporary festive numbers. Smuin dancer Erica Felsch will unwrap a joyful new piece set to the classic holiday tune "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Also on the bill is Smuin's iconic "Santa Baby" featuring the world's longest feather boa, and a dashing cameo by Elvis in the lively "Blue Christmas." Hula dancers and surfboards abound in "Christmas Island," which makes a triumphant return alongside Ben Needham-Wood's cheery "Frosty the Snowman." This sizzling second act will incorporate a number of popular dance styles such as the sock-hop, tap, and swing.

ABOUT SMUIN

For 25 years Smuin has pushed the boundaries of contemporary ballet within a distinctly American style, engaging and delighting audiences with uncommon physicality and expression. Founded in San Francisco in 1994 by Tony and Emmy award-winning choreographer Michael Smuin, the company is committed to creating work that merges the diverse vocabularies of classical ballet and contemporary dance. As Artistic Director since 2007, Celia Fushille has maintained Michael Smuin's legacy while enriching the company's impressive repertoire by collaborating with inventive choreographers from around the world, commissioning world premieres, and bringing new contemporary choreographic voices to the Smuin stage.

THE CHRISTMAS BALLET 2017 EDITION

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Daily Newspaper and Online Media sponsor for Smuin's 2018/2019 season is the San Francisco Chronicle and SFGATE.

For Calendar Editors:

WHAT:

Smuin kicks off the holidays with the return of *The Christmas Ballet*, the beloved Bay Area tradition featuring two acts packed to the brim with both flawless classical ballet and red-hot contemporary numbers. Celebrating the company's milestone silver anniversary, the 2018 edition of *The Christmas Ballet* will return to many original pieces from founder Michael Smuin, plus two festive world premieres. Featuring the perfect combination of long-time favorites and delightful new surprises, this charming medley is set to holiday tunes and incorporates a variety of popular dance styles including ballet, tap, jazz, and swing. *The Christmas Ballet* will tour the Bay Area, beginning with shows in Walnut Creek, continuing in Carmel and Mountain View, and finishing up with its annual holiday run at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco.

SHOWS:

WALNUT CREEK: November 16-17, 2018 7:30 pm Friday 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm Saturday	Lesher Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive (at Locust), Walnut Creek (925) 943-7469 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$84)
CARMEL: November 30-December 1, 2018 7:30 pm Friday 2:00 pm Saturday	Sunset Center San Carlos Street (between 8 th and 10 th), Carmel (831) 620-2048 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$63-\$81)
MOUNTAIN VIEW: December 5-9, 2018 7:30 pm Wednesday - Friday 2:00 pm & 7:30 pm Saturday 2:00 pm Sunday	Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts 500 Castro Street (at Mercy), Mountain View (650) 903-6000 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$86)
SAN FRANCISCO: December 13-24, 2018 7:30pm Thursday, December 13 7:30pm Friday, December 14 2:00pm & 7:30pm Saturday, December 15 2:00pm Sunday, December 16 2:00pm Wednesday, December 19	Yerba Buena Center for the Arts YBCA Theater 700 Howard Street (at Third) (415) 912-1899 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$91)

THE CHRISTMAS BALLET 2017 EDITION

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7:30pm Thursday, December 20 2:00pm & 7:30pm, Friday, December 21 2:00pm & 7:30pm, Saturday, December 22 2:00pm Sunday, December 23 12:00pm Monday, December 24	
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Discounts are available for students and groups of 10 or more.

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PRESS: Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: For high res photos, please visit: <http://www.cbpr.co/press/smuinxmas2018>